Souad Al-Sabah

A Woman Without Shores

Translated by

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Introduction

Souad Al-Sabah published her first collection of poems, Early Flashes, in 1961 when she was barely nineteen. It marked the beginning of a life-long journey of poetic exploration and achievements which has yielded fourteen volumes of verse and promises to yield more. Al-Sabah's creative, intellectual and emotional energies have continued to grow and expand over the years and, judging by her latest poems, show no signs of flagging. Indeed, her most recent volumes – A Woman Without Shores, Take Me to the Borders of the Sun and A Poem is a Female, the Female a Poem – show her at the height of her poetic powers and technical prowess, in full command of her idiom and still capable of capturing the essence of an experience in its fleeting moments, sensuous impressions and subtle nuances.

As one of the leading poets in Arabic, Al-Sabah has an invigoratingly fresh, distinctive voice, at once pensive and passionate, delicately lyrical and vibrantly dramatic. Whether she speaks of love or politics, and whatever the mood, her poems are consistently vigorous, provocative and exhilarating.

You never feel that she comes to poetry with a fully formed idea or a clear subject. Rather, the poem strikes you as a battleground of conflicting impulses and thoughts, a sensitive register of a profoundly sympathetic mind struggling to make sense of its own experience of the world without preconceptions and define itself in relation to it. The struggle is never conceptual or abstract; we experience it through a well-contrived persona, continuously projected in a variety of moods and situations, in different, vividly evoked environments, as both an involved party, in the grip of the experience, and a detached observer making incisive comments. In this struggle too, almost invariably, the intimately personal is also intensely political.

Indeed, one could say that Souad El-Sabah's perception of the world, herself and own experience is grounded in a sense of paradox which informs all her work. As an Arab woman in a conservative society, she seemed destined by history and culture to one sphere – the private, feminine and domestic – where she felt an alien. Inwardly driven to seek her real spiritual home in poetry and responsible public action, both traditionally male domains, she was deeply resented and made to feel more of an

alien, something of a monstrosity in fact. Her liberal, mind and independent spirit clashed violently with the culture she had imbibed as a child and which continued to besiege and cripple her; and though a lover of Kuwait, her homeland, she did not hesitate to unleash her fury against what she perceived as the forces of darkness, indeed of death there. The violence of the invective, its urgency and the corrosive mode in which she expresses it betray a personal sense of danger, a feeling of terrible threat which suggests, in turn, a postmodern awareness of the insidious power of ideology, of the fact that however hard one tries to rid oneself of it, traces of it could sediment at a deeper layer of one's consciousness and continue to lurk in the hidden recesses of the mind, imperceptibly influencing one's thoughts and deeds. In her battle against the dominant, repressive, patriarchal ideology she inherited from her native culture, Al-Sabah seems to realize that there is no final victory, that the battle has to be fought over and over.

Nowhere is this fear and hatred of oppression more powerfully expressed than in The Night Fatima Was Arrested, one of her wittiest and most vigorous and scathing satires. It begins with a shocking, three-line statement, all the more disturbing for its seemingly neutral, matter of fact tone:

> This is a country where female poems are circumcised
> And the sun is strangled as it rises
> In the interests of family security;

The tone, however, soon changes to one of rising anxiety in the rest of the stanza and the shift is effected by the use of repetition in an obsessive manner and short, breathless one-foot lines:

> (A country) Where a woman is slain if she dares to speak,
> To think,
> To write,
> Or love,
> In order to cleanse the family honour.

The pattern is repeated in the following stanzas in which the homeland is metaphorically transformed into a mythical monster that feeds on its offspring and where animal and nature imagery is used to expand the meaning and identify the oppression of women as a violation of nature and a heinous sin against life:

> This is a land that has devoured its women
> Then lain back happily
> Under the lacerating sun, in the midday heat.

This is the mythical land of Wak-Wak where thinking
is forbidden,
Women are slaughtered on their bridal beds like
camels,
Fish are forbidden to swim
And birds to fly...
This is a land which hates the rosebud that blooms,
Resents its fragrance,
And only dreams of sex and bed.

This is a land which has closed its skies
And mummified its women,
Declaring their faces a source of shame,
Their voices a source of shame,
All thought a source of shame,
Poetry, a source of shame,
And love, a source of shame,
Together with the green moon and blue letters.

This is a land which has abolished spring from the
calendar,

Abolished winter,

Abolished eyes and weeping.

This is a land which has taken leave of its senses

And chosen to live in a coma.

What could these slumbering, indolent, indifferent cities want from me –

A predatory, savage fighter?

If it is my mind they want,

I'd rather not have one.

What should a woman do with all her rains?

All her rivers?

How can she grow flowers and roses,

Out of this stony, arid land?

What do they want from a woman in our land?

Do they want her boiled?

Do they want her grilled?

Do they want her flesh and fat kneaded and baked in a pie?

Do they want her a sugar doll

Ready for copulation at all times?
Do they want her young and ignorant?
Well, the above are the ten commandments a woman should observe
To preserve the family heritage.

The poem ends on a desperate note of affirmation which reveals a sharp awareness of the lethal dangers that beset the quest for freedom:

I am sorry,
But I will never give up my sharp nails
And will go on, as always,
Marching ahead of the caravan,
And will fight for this till death –
My enemy's death, or mine.

The title of the poem quoted above, named after a famous Egyptian television serial based on a novel by Sekina Fuad, and some of its mythical and culinary imagery draw on popular culture and reveal another interesting aspect of Al-Sabah's dialectical imagination: the eclectic combination of elements and motifs from the (high) classical and (low) popular cultural

traditions. To the classical poetic heritage she owes the structural solidity of her verse and some technical features. From the popular heritage, she derives her lively rhythms, vivid idiom and many images and allusions. The fusion of two hierarchically differentiated legacies, with their respective idioms and frames of reference, generates a kind of productive tension on the linguistic, stylistic levels which reflects and consolidates the dominant thematic dialectics of male and female, the individual and society in her poetry.

In the case of the male/female binary opposition which underlies most of her love poems, acting as generative matrix, a synthesis is attempted and sometimes temporarily achieved through the Jungian concepts of anima and animus. El-Sabah subtly hints at the existence of a masculine principle (animus) in the female unconscious and of a feminine principle (anima) in the male unconscious. Patriarchal cultures, however, are keen to suppress this ambivalence in the interest of a clearer, differential opposition of male and female. Souad Al-Sabah is aware of the artificiality of this sexist opposition and its ideological directives and ramifications. She recognizes that the 'female' and 'male' identities imposed on men and women by culture are

detrimental social costructs which limit, stunt and warp the natural growth of both into well-integrated, creative, loving human beings. A person who is inwardly split and lacks a sense of human integrity and dignity, she believes, is incapable of loving. This explains the ambivalent attitude towards love we come across in many of the love poems: the longing for physical and spiritual union with the beloved and regarding this union as the fountainhead of life and creativity, on the one hand, and, on the other, the fear of forfeiting one's integrity and independence of spirit and, therefore, one's humanity in such a union.

In The Moon and the Beast, one of her most powerful poems, this divided feeling towards love comes across very vividly in a startling combination of tender sentiments and violent imagery. The poem also clearly points to the root cause of the problem, blaming it on the patriarchal culture which enshrines male dominance and female submission, and expresses a sense of rising frustration which reaches a desperate edge:

> Two forces fight within me:
> The desire to be your love
> And the fear of becoming your prisoner.

The moon wrestles with the beast,
The white with the black,
The existentialist with the Sufi,
Revolution with counter revolution
The craving to be with you
And the urge to kill you.

Two seas battle within me:
My temperate, feminine sea
And a masculine one of yours,
Planted with mines and pirates
And teeming with savage fish.
My sandy shores struggle against your waves,
And my forests against your tropical rains.

Loving you, I face
Two choices and have no third:
To retire into the copper cell of your chest,
Or walk out into the sun of freedom;
To surrender to the force of history,

Or take up arms against it;
To submit to your authoritarian discourse,
Or mutiny against your heaven-inspired, sacred words.

Deep inside me
Resentment merges
With maternal feelings,
A sense of security
With a foreboding of imminent storms.
I live out my days with you
Suspended
Between the trees of fire on your lips
And an abysmal void below.

When I am alone, your voice assaults me
Like a wolf with flaming eyes.
It leaves a gash in my neck,
A wound in my memory,
A stab in my waist,
A slit in my sheets.
And every night it kneads me like a dough,

With cinnamon, saffron
And spices hot.
I am torn, into a thousand shreds,
Between your civilized paper-cover
And real aggression on females,
Between the fire of your words
And your frosty kisses,
Between your patriarchal views
And narcissistic postures,
Between your boundless liberalism
And equally boundless reactionism.

The thematic dialectic of the individual versus society which, as I mentioned earlier, constitutes another dominant element in Souad Al-Sabah's poetry, is sometimes projected in the poems through another dialectic in which nature is the thesis and history the antithesis. In this context, the individual is defined as a free woman and identified with nature, not as a sentimentalized concept, but as a living, productive/destructive force. History, on the other hand, is seen as a male product which consists mainly of feuds, violent, bloody deeds and acts of aggression. No wonder the persona who speaks in the Revolt of

the Leather-bound Chickens, who describes herself a "a woman from a distant sphere/ A distant star," describes her lover as one who has "emerged/ Out of a dusty book" in whose eyes she could "see the era of the Mamelukes live again/And glimpse the slave market." She berates him for guarding the shameful legacy of capitalist greed and female oppression bequeathed to him by his ancestors: "Carry on, she says,"

As your ancestors used to do
When they bought women
As if they were estates
And regarded them
As a source of humiliation
And a shameful disgrace.

Carry on as jackals do,
Spreading terror through the desert,...

I'm not the woman for you, sir.
Look for another
That looks like a carpet
In the court of Harun Al-Rashid.

Carry on
The same as all the tribe's men:
Invade, decimate,
Advance, retreat,
For in the history of your ignorance
There is nothing new.
Carry on
The same as jackals do,
But you can never eat my flesh
Or shear my wool.
For know you that my body is sacred land....

Given the dialectical nature of Souad El-Sabah's poetic imagination it is not surprising that, structurally, her favourite poetic modes are the dramatic monologue and the confidential public speech. Whether the subject is love or politics, she assumes a silent audience who listens, be it a lover whom her persona addresses in intimate surroundings, in a situation fraught with conflict and tension, or a congregation of sympathetic listeners in a public arena. But even when she opts for the solitary mode of the confessional soliloquy, the poems often take the form of a dialogue with the self and the same dramatic quality is discernible. This makes her poetry best

appreciated when orally delivered. In such recitals, Al-Sabah turns a poem into a lively dramatic performance which thrills the audience and tickles them to laughter sometimes even as it challenges their inherited views, cherished ideas and hallowed assumptions. But even in print, one cannot fail to be struck by El-Sabah's astringent wit, her delicious, often sardonic sense of humour and her ability to turn irony into a lethal weapon.
Unfortunately, even the best of translations cannot do justice to this aspect of the poetry which relies in part on punning and local cultural references. The title of the last poem quoted above, The Revolt of the Leather-bound Chickens, for instance, involves an intelligent play on the word "leather-bound" – "mujallad" in Arabic – which when used, quite unexpectedly, to describe chicken immediately evokes a similar word, "mujammad" which differs from it only in one letter and means "frozen." This kind of word-play is far from gratuitous, intended merely to amuse. In the context of the poem, it can suggest a cluster of related meanings: one can detect a hidden comparison between the 'covering' or 'binding' of women in some societies, which freezes their existence and degrades them to the level of conserved, marketable edibles, and the mental rigidity of their males who, like the lover in the poem, are prisoners of the dusty

(and no doubt leather-bound) book of history. And since frozen chickens are an invention of modern, industrialized society and usually sold in supermarkets, their appearance in the context of a culture which, under the thin veneer of civilization, is far from modern or industrialized, constitutes a sharp, satirical dig at cultural hypocrisy.

The word-play also paradoxically identifies the commodification of women as "frozen chickens" with their false valorization as treasured, "leather-bound" or "mummified" cultural possessions. Compared to frozen chickens, women are seen to fare much worse: unlike their feathered sisters they never thaw, are never literally consumed and never provide real nourishment to anybody. Like the speaker in The Moon and the Beast, they seem doomed to live out their days suspended between trees of fire above, which they can never reach, and an abysmal void below.

Souad Al-Sabah has been described as a feminist, which she certainly is in thought and outlook. Her feminism, however, does not stop at the liberation of women. It aspires to liberate men as well, and children, and even nature from the destructive attrition of man. Its ultimate dream is of a human race, unfettered in mind and body, free to create and love.

Poem I

Exceptional Wishes
For
An Exceptional Man

Epigraph

"A world of difference between us, sir:
For I am the civilization, while all tyrants are male,"

-1-

Happy new year…
Happy new year.
I'd rather we said to one another
Happy love.

How cribbed and cramped words seem
When we repeat them just as others do.
I do not wish my feelings

Copies of the wishes of others.
I will not have a love pre-packed in postcards.
I love you when the year begins.
I love you when it draws to an end.
Since love extends beyond all time,
Beyond all known space,
I much prefer we wished each other
A happy love –
One that rebels against the theatrical rites of speech,
A love that breaks the rules,
Opposes origins and roots,
The whole order of things,
A love that seeks to change
All that the lexicons of love contain.

-2-

What do I want on new year's eve?
What a child you are to ask.
How could you not know my love?
It is you and nothing else I want.

O, you, who are attached to my jugular vein,
No gift can stir me as a woman;
Perfumes do not thrill me;
Flowers do not thrill me;
Dresses do not thrill me,
Nor does the distant moon.
What would I do with necklaces and bracelets?
What use to me are jewels?
O, traveller in my blood,
O, voyager in my veins,
What would I do with all the treasures of the earth,
My one and only treasure?

-3-

My lord,
With your fingers you shape my life afresh,
You write me and direct me,
Break me and put me back together,
And can kindle my revolt, and shifts and turns,
The midnight chimes are glorious,

And this snow, a music which speaks to us,
And I am praying you may always love me,
So hear my prayer.

-4-

Chopin
Is playing by the fireside.
Tell me "I love you"
The more to believe
I am a woman.
Tell me "I love you"
That I may turn at once
Into a translucent pearl.

-5-

My lord,
For twenty years you have remained concealed inside
my veins.
You wrap me round with your coat

As hand in hand we tread the snow,
If I can have a shelter in your heart,
What else could I desire in this world?

-6-

So long as you remain with me,
The year will be far happier than could ever be.

Poem II

Confessions of a Wintry Woman

-1-

My madness knows no bounds;
My mind has no boundaries;
My follies, though innumerable,
Can never have an end.
I wonder my extravagant nature vexes you;
Who can get cross when flowers are in excess?
This is the way I have been since I lived:
My womanhood is crushing,
My passions always burning,
My shores forever lashed by thunder and by lightening.

This is the way I have been since I loved:
My sails unfurled,
My braids undone,
My veins wide open,

My rivers mocking dams.

So, don't stand so flustered and so dazed

Before the hurricane.

For know I am a woman

Whose cravings have no end.

-2-

This is what I am, my lord,

This is how I am

Without paints and makeup.

My love is wintry;

And when the winter ends,

I do not feel a woman.

My love is wild;

And if I do not crack the crust of things,

I do not feel a woman.

Suicidal is my love...

If into the sea, one night, you threw me,

You would find me walking on the waves.

And like a child is my love...

You touch my waist but once

And I take flight and glide between the sky and earth.

Therefore, do not chastise the child in me.

Without it I become

A wooden butterfly,

A flower made of paper,

A white, empty canvass.

-3-

O, you

Who sit like a sultan ruling over paper.

O, sultan,

Pen your words on my bracelet,

On my dishdasha [1];

Pen them on my eyelids,

On the wind and the waves,

On the rain drops,

And on the gulfs and bays

1. Dishdasha: a kind of head cover worn by women.

I wish I were
An 'a', an 'o' or an 'e',
Or a tiny flower
In your orchard of words.
If only I could, my friend,
If only I could.

-4-

O, my liberator
Who released me from the power of time and place,
If you could know how much you dazzle me,
How happy I feel,
And how secure!

In your cosy home,
Everything excites me...
The red carpets,
The flowers,
The paintings,
The smell of tobacco that clings to the walls,
Even the seats when they feel secure excite me.

-5-

O, you
Sunk in your leather chair,
Can you see me through your forest of paper?
O, you
Planted in my depths like a rose,
How jealous I feel my friend
When your hands play their melodies on those sheets.

I am jealous of the smell of ink,
The scent of silence,
The fragrance of the burning wood,
The crackling fire.
I am jealous of the love letters you write,
The house cat you cuddle,
The handle of the cup you hold.

-6-

My lord
Who sit at the end of the world,

Do you remember me?

I am the woman you moulded out of sea foam,

And ruby stones

And coral reefs.

I am the same

You used to call when you desired her

Qamar El-Zaman [2].

O, you, who at your hands my womanhood took form,

Who shaped my waist,

And put the wave into my hair,

Made the seasons for apricots and those for pomegranates.,

Your love has given me a homeland

More beautiful than any I could ever have.

2. Qamar El-Zaman: literally, "Moon of all Time," is a name frequently given to beautiful men and women, especially princes and princesses, in The Arabian Nights.

Poem III

Suppositions

Supposing,
Supposing you
Were not my love,
What would I be?
What would you be?
How could I tell I was a woman
Without you hiding under my eyelids?
What good is love my friend
Unless it rides the sea of madness?

Supposing
Supposing you
Were not my love,
What then would be the sense in life?
How would the suns go round without you?
Who would bring the spring,
Allow the corn to grow,

And teach the nightingales their song?
How could the streams flow,
And plants grow from our lips?
Would civilization hold?
Would poetry,
Painting,
Sculpture?
Would languages survive?

* * *

If you took your arms away
One day and left,
What would the place look like?
How could I face all the little things around me?
How could I bear the smell of coffee,
The colour of the cups,
And dry the tears my dresses would shed?
How could I resist your tobacco smell
And flee the circles of smoke?
How could I look at the house clock

If you left,
Knowing you had stolen time as you went?

If you left,
I ask myself,
Where would the moonlight go?
For whom would the stars shine,
The flowers spread their fragrance?
And who would brush my hair
And comb the hair of trees?
And when November comes,
Who would encircle my waist
And give me shelter from the rain?

* * *

My man
Who roam my cells
Like fate
And divine decree,
I ask myself.

If we retired one day from loving,

Who would colour the rainbow,

And light the sunset fire,

And move the string to sing?

* * *

Supposing

Supposing –

Though I don't like to suppose it –

That you were not my love,

Who then would fill the universe with beautiful verse?

Who would adorn the earth?

Poem IV

Fingerprints

What do I do with the heritage of emotions
You planted in my blood
Like a Jasmine tree?
What do I do with your voice
Still pecking like a cockerel at the face of my sheets?
What do I do with the imprint of your taste
Stamped on the furnishings in my room?

And the porcelain statues scattered in the corners?
The paintings we chose together?
The books we read together?
The souvenirs we picked up in cities all over?
The shells we gathered on the Caribbean shores?

Tell me dear sir,
What do I do with this heavy legacy of memories
You left on my shoulders
And on my lips?

I have tried, more than once,
To rid myself of you and it,
But was ashamed to sell my past,
My feelings,
And my braids
In public auctions.

Where could I go
When you have all the maps of the world?
At which café could I sit
When you have monopolized all the coffee trees,
And the very smell of coffee?
Which language could I speak
When you hold all the keys to my tongue?

* * *

I tried deporting you
To the other side of the moon.
But when the moon came up,
You returned with her beams
And, sketched on my window pane, I found your face.

I tried to send you to your mother
Who had taught you to be spoilt and messy,
To love collecting stamps...
And women.
She, however, sent you back by registered mail
With her best wishes.

* * *

I tried putting you in a boarding school
To learn something of love,
Something of poetry,
Something of chivalry.
The headmistress, however,
Sent you back at the end of the first day
After you had quarrlled with all the teachers
And set fire to the girls' clothes.

* * *

I tried to uproot you from the dust of my memory;
You clung to my tissues

Like a sea weed.
I tried to uproot your smell from my pores;
My skin frayed and fell,
But you did not come out.

* * *

I tried to banish you to the end of the world,
Packed your luggage,
Bought your ticket
And booked you on the first boat out.
But when the steamer moved,
A tear rose in my eye
And I discovered, standing on the wharf,
That the person who went into exile
Was me, not you.

* * *

Everything is erasable, sir,
Save for your fingerprints on my womanhood.

Poem V

The Moon and the Beast

-1-

Two forces fight within me:
The desire to be your love
And the fear of becoming your prisoner.
The moon wrestles with the beast,
The white with the black,
The existentialist with the Sufi,
Revolution with counter revolution
The craving to be with you
And the urge to kill you.

-2-

Two seas battle within me:
My temperate, feminine sea
And a masculine one of yours,
Planted with mines and pirates

And teeming with savage fish.
My sandy shores struggle against your waves,
And my forests against your tropical rains.

-3-

Loving you, I face
Two choices and have no third:
To retire into the copper cell of your chest,
Or walk out into the sun of freedom;
To surrender to the force of history,
Or take up arms against it;
To submit to your authoritarian discourse,
Or mutiny against your heaven-inspired, sacred words.

-4-

Deep inside me
Resentment merges
With maternal feelings,
A sense of security

With a foreboding of imminent storms.
I live out my days with you
Suspended
Between the trees of fire on your lips
And an abysmal void below.

-5-

When I am alone, your voice assaults me
Like a wolf with flaming eyes.
It leaves a gash in my neck,
A wound in my memory,
A stab in my waist,
A slit in my sheets.
And every night it kneads me like a dough,
With cinnamon, saffron
And spices hot.

-6-

I am torn, into a thousand shreds,
Between your civilized paper-cover

And real aggression on females,
Between the fire of your words
And your frosty kisses,
Between your patriarchal views
And narcissistic postures,
Between your boundless liberalism
And equally boundless reactionism.

-7-

I launch inside me
Long women's marches,
Beginning in Tangier
And ending in Hadramaut,
Sporting slogans scrawled with lipstick,
Waving flags made
With the threads of old socks,
And shouting protests against the one-party system,
The one-man system,
And multi-national bed.

-8-

When the demonstrations end
And combs return to their sheaths,
Rings to their drawers
And perfumes to their bottles,
I throw away my banners,
Forget my protests
And look for you in the nearby cafes
To have my coffee with you.

Poem VI

A Woman Without Shores

My lord,
My feelings for you are a sea that has no shores;
But when it comes to love, my attitude is not accepta-
ble to the tribes.
It's you I care for though,
Not what the Taghleb or the Wa'el tribes want.
You are the one I love
And I don't care at all
If they decreed the spilling of my blood
And branded me a renegade
And violator of ancestral norms.

* * *

My lord,
I shall continue fighting
For life to triumph,

For the forest trees to sprout new leaves,
For love to find its way into the houses of the dead.
For none but love
Can move the dead.

* * *

This being so, my lord,
Why fear my waves and tempests then?
Do you not love a woman with no shores?

Poem VII

A Black Poem

-1-

How the war has changed me, my friend.
How it has changed my nature,
My womanhood,
And scattered everything inside me.
Dialogue is no longer possible;
Screaming is no longer possible;
Madness is no longer possible.
We are locked up in a bottle of tears
Where only weeping is possible.

-2-

The war has shattered me my friend
Messed up the maps of my emotions
And smashed the compass of my heart.

Nothing is left:

No animals

Or vegetation,

No grass

Or water,

Or warmth

Or tenderness.

The war has disfigured me, my friend,

And how it can disfigure people!

Is there a chance you could love me again

When nothing in my eyes has remained

Except the rains of sorrow?

-3-

After the war, my friend,

I know no longer who I am:

A wounded cat?

A lost star?

A dumb and silent tear?

Or a paper boat

The wind and rain have crushed?
Where, I wonder, we could meet
When burnt cities,
A crushed nation, keep us apart,
When ancient tribal feuds –
The ancient wars of Dahes and Ghabraa tribes renewed
Separate us.

Is there a chance you could love me again
When grief has broken me to pieces?
The war has snatched me away from my childhood,
Assassinated my smile,
Uprooted my green trees
And torn my innocence to shreds.
Neither have I remained a flower,
Nor stayed a member of womankind.

Who, I wonder, could convince me
That the sky is still blue?
That, in these days
Of spiritual pollution,

Intellectual pollution
And national pollution,
We could continue to be friends?

-4-

My friend,
I am no more an isle of peace,
The woman on whose eyelids
The doves were wont to roost and build their nests;
No more a water fount,
A symphony in marble.

My friend,
The grass has dried on our lips,
And speech has broken down.
Could we relive our days of love,
Buried as we are
In mire and rubble?

-5-

My dear man,
The "I" I have become is not the same you used to know.
My memory is riddled with holes;
Its walls are blank; gone are the dates,
The addresses,
The faces
And the names.

Where could we go, my friend?
We own not a single inch on earth
Or in the sky.
And what
could we do in lands
Where people have to queue
For every breath of air?

-6-

My friend,
I feel so deeply frustrated,
So dizzy
And tired!
Forgive, therefore, my gloom
If you happen to read this poem I dressed in black.

Poem VIII

Private Lesson

Do not censure my deep shyness.
I am but a novice still, while you are an expert.
O, master of words, give me a chance,
That I, your little bird, may learn my lesson.
Take me with all my simplicity and child-like innocence,
For I am still a toddler and you an adult.

While I cannot my nose from my mouth distinguish,
You are omnipotent where women are concerned.
How come you are so glibly eloquent
When words always perish on my lips?
In love, I am completely helpless:
A lover is by nature meek.
If I forget the lessons in love you gave me,
I pray that you, the all-forgiving, will pardon me.
O, you who keep history tucked away under your bed,

You vain, pretentious man who postures as a seer,
You are so cool, so self-assured,
While I go round myself in circles.
The earth under my feet is always burnt
And under yours is silk and velvet.
A world of difference between us, sir:
Conservative I am; reckless you are;
Enchained I am, but you can fly;
I wear the veil while you can clearly see;
I am unknown and you a big celebrity.

* * *

A world of difference between us, sir, indeed;
For I am the civilization,
While all tyrants are male.

Poem IX

For a Woman, her Poem;
For a Man, his blood Lust

-1-

They will keep hounding me, I know,
With letters,
Knives
And cheap magazines.
I know full well their views,
The hang-up which they have
About women who write.

I, however,
Do not ever look behind me
Since I know my way so well.
And those riffraff, numerous though they are,
Can never catch up with me, or even touch my heels,
Or pluck a single feather from my pride.

For poetry has taught me to walk,
My head held up, high in the sky.

-2-

They set their critical dogs on my trail
To terrorize me.
They mobilized all the media arsenal against me
And called in the Janissaries to back them up,
And all to silence me.
This was the way their master had suggested
They crucify me.

But critical dogs have never frightened me,
Nor have their masters either.
They cannot repress my voice
Or subdue me.
They cannot arrest my lightening,
My stormy winds,
Or the downpour of my madness.

-3-

I defy them all,
All the different kinds of families that have ruled us
In the name of heaven.
I defy the thieves who robbed my people of their power,
And the estate agents,
And those who trade in women's flesh.
I defy the robbers of the freedom of thought
And those who sanctioned the slaughter of poetry while it lived
And the slaying of all poets.

I defy all the professional looters and plunderers
And those who have betrayed the heritage of the desert.
I defy them with my poetry,
With my prose,
With my screams
And the explosions of my blood.

I defy the thousand Pharaohs on this earth

And join the party of the poor.

-4-

They will keep hounding me

With rumours

And lies.

I, however,

Do not ever look behind me.

For poetry has taught me to walk,

My head held up, high in the sky.

Poem X

The Revolt
of the Leather-bound Chicken

-1-

I shall declare
In the name of Souad,
Of Hind
And Lubna
And of Batoul,
I shall declare in the name of thousands of leather-
bound chicken,
In the name of thousands of canned chicken,
That I have strangled you with my braids
And drunk your blood like wine.
And I will not go back on what I say.

-2-

I shall throw to the sea
The nightgowns of my days

And burn all the ships before they dock
And will announce to all, my cockerel,
That I have finally avenged
All the women of the tribe
And stabbed you
Twice,
Thrice,
Four times
And buried you under the ruins.
And I will not go back on what I say.

-3-

I shall avenge
Your baffled women, your patient, long-suffering
women
And all the minors whose youth,
Like seeds or fields, you bought.
I shall inveigh against you
In the name of all the virgins
You married

And divorced
The way horses are bought and sold.

O, lover
Who, in the game of love,
Do not distinguish
Between the flesh of women
And cattle meat.
I shall go on screaming
Until the heavens fall down
On me and you, my master.
And I will not go back on what I say.



-4-

O, you who have emerged
Out of a dusty book,
In your eyes I can see the era of the Mamelukes live
again
And glimpse the slave market.
Carry on

As your ancestors used to do
When they bought women
As if they were estates
And regarded them
As a source of humiliation
And a shameful disgrace.

Carry on as jackals do,
Spreading terror through the desert,
But I will not go back
On my decision, sir.

-5-

You old, inveterate ignoramus.
O, you who returned from France

On an iron horse,
With camel milk still on your lips
And the taste of sopped bread with meat and broth
Still in your mouth,

Has life failed to polish you at all?
Have not women refined you a little?
Have not the city cafes taught you
Anything new to say?

-6-

I'm not the woman for you, sir.
Look for another
That looks like a carpet
In the court of Harun Al-Rashid.

I am a woman from a distant sphere,
And a distant star.
Neither promises can bend me
Nor do I yield to threats.
I'm not the woman for you, sir.
We are opposites in everything
And strange to each other in every way.
What do I have that you could want?

-7-

Carry on
The same as all the tribe's men:
Invade, decimate,
Advance, retreat,
For in the history of your ignorance
There is nothing new.
Carry on
The same as jackals do,
But you can never eat my flesh
Or sheer my wool.

For know you that my body is sacred land,
My mind a box of ice.
You can behave
As a wolf who speaks three tongues,
But you can never penetrate my forts,
Never contain my madness,
Nor can your soldiers drink one drop
Of the liquid darkness of my eyes.

-8-

I shall return you, sir,
With due respect
By post, the way you came to me.
I love you not

And neither like the taste of camel milk
Or that of sopped bread with meat and broth.

-9-

I would blow up
The heavens above, one by one,
Star by star
Rather than give up that which I want.

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سُعَاد


ميموزا
Mimoza

1

عامٌ سعيدْ . .

عامٌ سعيدْ . .

إنِّي أُفضِّلُ أن نقولَ لبعضِنَا :

«حُبٌ سعيدْ» .

ما أضيَقَ الكَلِماتِ حينَ نقولُها كالآخَرينْ .

أنا لا أريدُ بأن تكونَ عواطفي

مَنْقُولةً عن أُمْنِياتِ الآخرينْ . .

أنا أرفضُ الحُبَّ المعبَّأَ في بطاقاتِ البريدْ . .
إنّي أحِبُّكَ في بداياتِ السَّنَهْ . .
وأنا أحِبُّكَ في نهاياتِ السَّنَهْ . .
فالحُبُّ أكبرُ من جميع الأزمنَهْ
والحُبُّ أرحَبُ من جَميعِ الأمكِنَهْ
ولذا أُفَضِّلُ أن نقولَ لبعضِنا
«حُبٌّ سعيدْ» . .
حُبٌّ يثورُ على الطقوس المسرحيَّةِ في الكلامْ .
حُبٌّ يثورُ على الأُصولِ . .
على الجذورِ . .
على النظامْ . .
حُبٌّ يحاولُ أن يُغَيِّرَ كلَّ شيء
في قواميسِ الغَرَامْ ! ! . . .

2

ماذا أريدُ إذا أَتى العامُ الجديدْ . . ؟ .
كَمْ أنتَ طفلٌ في سؤالِكَ . .
كيف تجهلُ ، يا حبيبي ، ما أُريدْ ؟ .
إني أريدُكَ أنتَ وحدَكَ . .
أيُّها المربوطُ في حَبْلِ الوريدْ .
كلُّ الهدايا لا تُثيرُ أنوثتي
لا العطرُ يُدْهِشُني . .
ولا الأزْهارُ تُدهِشُني . .
ولا الأثوابُ تُدهِشُني . .
ولا القَمَرُ البعيدْ . .
ماذا سأفعلُ بالعُقُودِ . . وبالأساورْ ؟ .
ماذا سأفعلُ بالجواهِرْ ؟ .
يا أيُّها الرجُلُ المسافرُ في دمي
يا أيّها الرجُلُ المسافرْ
ماذا سأفعلُ في كنوزِ الأرضِ . .
يا كنزي الوحيدْ ؟ . ؟ .

3

يا سيِّدي :

يا مَنْ يُغَيِّرُ في أصابعِهِ حياتي

يا مَنْ يؤلِّفُني . . ويُخْرِجُني .

ويكْسِرُني . . ويجمَعُني . .

ويُشْعِلُ ثورتي . . وتحوُّلاتي .

أجْراسُ نِصْفِ اللّيلِ رائعةٌ

وهذا الثلجُ موسيقَى تُكلِّمُنا

وأنا أُصلِّي كي تظلَّ تُحِبُّني

فاقْبَلْ صَلاَتي . . .

4

(شُوبَانُ) . .

يَعْزِفُ في جوارِ المِدْفَأَهْ

قُلْ لي : (أُحِبُّكِ)

كي تزيدَ قَنَاعتي

أني امرأهْ . . .

قُلْ لي : (أُحِبُّكِ) . .

كي أصيرَ بلحظةٍ

شفَّافةً كاللُّؤلؤهْ . . . .

5

يا سيِّدي :
يا أيُّها المخبوءُ من عشرينَ عاماً . . في الوريدْ
يا مَنْ يُغَطِّيني بمعْطَفهِ
إذا سِرْنا معاً فوقَ الجليدْ . .
ما دُمْتُ لاجئةً لصدركَ . .
ما الذي من هذه الدُّنيا أُريدْ ؟ .

6

ما دُمْتَ موجوداً معي . .
فالعامُ أسْعَدُ مِنْ سعيدْ . . .

اعترافات امرأة شتائية



1

ما لجُنوني أَبداً حُدودْ . .
ولا لعقلي أَبداً حُدودْ . .
ولا حَماقاتي على كَثْرتِها
تحدُّها حُدودْ . .
يا رجُلاً يُغْضِبُهُ تَطَرُّفي
مَنْ الذي يَغضَبُ من تطرُّفِ الوُرودْ ؟ .
هذا أنا . . من يومِ أَنْ خُلِقْتْ
أُنوثتي ساحِقةٌ . . .
عَواطِفي حارِقَةٌ . . .
شواطِئي تضربُها البروقُ والرّعودْ .

هذا أنا من يوم أنْ عشِقْتْ . .

أشْرِعَتـي مَفْتوحةٌ

ضَفائري مفتوحةٌ

أوردتـي مفتوحةٌ

وأنْهُري تهزأُ بالسُّدودْ .

فلا تقفْ مُرْتبِكاً . . وذاهِلاً . .

أمام إعْصاري . . فإنّي امرأةٌ . .

ليس لما تُريدُه حُدودْ . . .

2

هذا أنا . . يا سيِّدي

هذا أنا . .

بغير أصْباغٍ ، ولا طِلاءْ .

حُبّي شتائِيٌّ . .

ولا أشعُرُ أنّي امرأةٌ

إذا انتهَى الشتاءْ . .

حُبّي جنونِـيٌّ . .

ولا أشعُرُ أنّي امرأةٌ

إذا لم أحطِّمْ قِشْرَةَ الأشياءْ . . .

حُبِّي انتحاريٌّ . .

فلو رمَيْتني في البحر ، ذات ليلةٍ

وجَدْتَني . . أسيرُ فوقَ الماءْ . .

حُبِّي طُفوليٌّ . .

فلو لمسْتَ خَصْري مرةً

حَلَّقْتُ بين الأرضِ والسَّماءْ . . .

فلا تعاقِبْني على طفولتي

فإنَّني من دونِها ،

فَراشةٌ من خَشبٍ .

وزهرةٌ من ورقٍ . .

ولوحَةٌ بيضاءْ . . .

3

يا أيُّها الجالسُ . .
سُلْطاناً على أوراقِهِ
يا أيّها السُّلطانْ . .
أكتُبْ على إسْوارَتي . . .
أكتُبْ على دَشْداشتي . . .
أكتُبْ على الأجْفانْ . .
أكتُبْ على الرّياح . .
والأمواج . .
والأمطارِ . .
والخُلْجانْ . . .

أُمْنيتي . .
بأن أكونَ فَتْحةً . .
أوْ ضَمَّةً . .
أو كَسْرَةً . .
أو زَهْرةً صغيرةَ
في ذلك البُسْتانْ . .
لو كان بالإمكان ، يا صديقي
لو كان بالإمكانْ . . .

4

يا رجُلاً حرَّرَني . .
من سُلْطَةِ الزّمانِ والمكانْ . .
لو كُنْتَ تدري ، كَمْ أنا مَبْهورةٌ . .
وكَمْ أنا سعيدةٌ . .
وكَمْ أنا أشعُرُ بالأَمانْ .

يُثيرُني . .

في بيتكَ الأليفِ ، كلُّ شَيءٍ . .

البُسُطُ الحمراءُ . .

والأزهارُ . .

واللوحاتُ . .

والتِّبغُ الذي يرفُضُ أن يفارقَ الحيطانْ . . .

تُثيرُني .

حتى الكراسي عندما تُحسُّ بالأمانْ . . .

5

يا أيُّها الغارِقُ في مقعدِهِ الجلديِّ . .

هل تُبصِرُني ؟ .

في زَحْمَةِ الأوراقْ .

يا أيُّها المزروعُ كالوردةِ في الأعماقْ . .

أغارُ من يدَيْكَ . . يا صديقي

حين على الأوراقِ تَعْزِفانْ . .

أغارُ من رائحةِ الحِبْرِ . .

ومن رائحةِ الصَّمْتِ . .

ومن رائحة الأحطابِ . .

والنّيرانْ . .

أغار من رسائل الحُبِّ . . التي تكتبُها

وقطَّةِ البيْتِ التي تحضُنُها . .

وقَبْضَةِ الفنجانْ . . .

6

يا سيِّدي . .

الجالسَ في نهاية الدُّنْـيَا . .

ألا تذكُرني ؟ .

أنا التي شكَّلتَني

مِنْ رَغْوةِ البحرِ . .

ومن حجارة الياقوتِ . .

والمَرْجانْ . . .

أنا التي . .

كنتَ تناديني ، إذا أرَدْتَني :

يا قمرَ الزَّمانْ . .

يا مَنْ على يدَيْه قد تشكَّلَتْ أُنوثتي

يا أيّـها المسؤولُ عن هَنْدَسةِ الخَصْرِ . .

وعن تموُّجِ الشَّعْرِ . .

وعن مواسم المُشمُشِ ، والرُّمانْ . .

يا رجُلاً عوَّضَني بحُبِّهِ . .

عن أجملِ الأوطانْ . . .

افتِرَاضَاتٌ


Mimoza

إذا ما افْتَرضْنَا . .

إذا ما افْتَرضْنَا . .

بأنَّكَ لستَ حبيبي

فماذا أكونُ ؟ .

وماذا تكونْ ؟ .

وكيْفَ أَقولُ بأنِّيَ أُنْثَى ؟ .

إذا لم أُخَبِّئْكَ تحتَ الجُفُونْ .

وما قيمةُ العِشْقِ ، يا سيِّدي

إذا لم يُسافِرُ ببحْرِ الجُنُونْ ؟ ؟ .

إذا ما افْتَرضْنَا . .
إذا ما افْتَرضْنا . .
بأنَّكَ لستَ حبيبي
فما هو مَعْنى الحياةْ ؟ .
وكيف تدورُ الشّموسُ بدونِكَ . .
كيف يجيءُ الرّبيعُ بدونِكَ . .

كيفَ ستَعْلُو السَّنابِلُ ؟ .
كيفَ تُغنّي البلابلُ
كيفَ تَفيضُ الجداولُ ؟ .
كيف سيَطْلُعُ من شَفَتَيْنَا النَّباتْ ؟ .
وهل تسْتمِرُّ الحضاراتُ ؟ .
والشِّعْرُ . .
والرَّسْمُ . .
والنَّحْتُ . .
هل تستمِرُّ اللُّغاتْ ؟ .

* * *

إذا ما رَفَعْتَ ذِراعَيْكَ عَنّي . .
وسافرتَ يوماً ،
فكيفَ سَيُصْبِحُ شَكْلُ المكانْ ؟ . .
وكيف أواجهُ كُلَّ الشّؤون الصغيرةِ ، حولي ؟
وكيف أُقاوِمُ رائحةَ البُنِّ ؟ .
كيف أقاوِمُ لونَ الفناجينِ ؟ .
كيف سأمْسَحُ دَمْعَ الفساتينِ ؟ .
كيف أقاوِمُ رائحةَ التِّبْغِ ؟ .
كيف سأهربُ من حَلَقاتِ الدُخَانْ ؟ .
وكيف أُحدِّقُ في ساعةِ البيتِ
بَعْدَ رحيلكَ . .
يا مَنْ سَرَقْتَ الزَّمانْ ؟ ؟ . .

أُسائِلُ نَفْسِي :

إذا ما ذهَبْتَ

إلى أينَ يذهبُ ضوءُ القَمَرْ ؟ .

ومِنْ أجل مَنْ ، ستُضيءُ النجومُ ؟ .

ومِنْ أجل مَنْ ، سيفوحُ الزَّهَرْ ؟ .

ومَنْ سيُمَشِّطُ بعدَكَ شَعْري ؟ .

ومَنْ سيُمَشِّطُ شَعْرَ الشَّجَرْ ؟ .

وإنْ جاءَ تشرينُ . .

مَنْ سيُطَوِّقُ خَصْري ؟ .

ويَعْصِمُني من مياه المَطَرْ ؟ .

* * *

أيا رجُلاً . .

يتجوّلْ بينَ خلاياي . .

مثلَ القضاءِ . .

ومثلَ القَدَرْ . .

أُسائِلُ نَفْسي :

إذا ما اسْتَقَلْنا مِن الحُبِّ يوماً ،

فمَنْ سوف يرسُمُ ألوانَ قوسِ قُزَحْ ؟ .

ومَنْ سوف يُوقِدُ نارَ الغُروبِ ؟ .

ومَنْ سيُحرِّكُ شوقَ الوَتَرْ ؟ .

* * *

إذا ما افتَرضْنَا . .
إذا ما افتَرضْنَا . .
– ولستُ أُحِبُّ افْتِراضي . .
بأنّكَ لستَ حبيبي . .
فَمَنْ يملأُ الكونَ شِعْراً جميلاً ؟ .
ومَنْ سيُجَمِّلُ أرض البَشَرْ ؟ ؟ .

بَصَمَاتٌ



ماذا أفعلُ بتراثِكَ العاطِفيِّ
المزروعِ في دمي . .
كشَجَرةِ ياسَمينْ ؟ .
ماذا أفعلُ بصَوْتِكَ الذي
يَنْقُر كالدِّيك وجهَ شَراشِفي ؟ .
ماذا أفعلُ ببَصَماتِ ذوقِك
على أثاثِ غُرفتي ؟ . .

بتماثيل السيراميك المُبَعْثَرةِ في الزوايا .
باللَّوحاتِ التي انْتقَيْنَاها معاً . .
والكُتُبِ التي قَرأْناها معاً . .
والتِّذْكارات السياحيَّةِ
التي لَملَمْناها مِنْ مُدُنِ العالَمْ . .
وبالأصدافِ التي جَمَعْناها
من شَواطىء البَحْرِ الكاريبي ؟ . .

قُلْ لي يا سيِّدي :
ماذا أفعلُ بهذه التركةِ الثّقيلةِ مِنَ الذّكرياتِ
التي تركْتَها على كَتِفَيَّ . .
وعلى شَفَتَيَّ ؟ .

لقد حاولتُ أكثرَ من مرَّةْ
أن أتخلَّصَ مِنْكَ . . ومِنْها . .
ولكنَّني خجلتُ مِنْ بيع تاريخي .
وبيعِ مَشاعِري . .
وبيعِ ضفائِري . .
في المَزادِ العلنيِّ ! !

إلى أيٍّ مدينةٍ مِنْ مُدُنِ العالَمْ
سأذهبْ ؟ .
ومعكَ خرائطُ كُلٍّ الأمكنةْ
وفي أيٍّ مقهًى سأجْلِسْ ؟ .
وأنتَ احتكرْتَ أشجارَ البُنّ .
ورائحةَ القهوَةْ . .
وبأيَّةِ لغةٍ سوفَ أتكلَّمْ ؟ .
وبيدَيْكَ مفاتيحُ لُغَتي . . .

* * *

حاولتُ ترحيلَكَ
إلى الوجهِ الثّاني مِنَ القَمَرْ . .
فلمّا طَلَعَ القَمَرْ
عُدْتَ مع أشِعَّتِهْ . .
ووجدتُ وجهكَ مرسوماً على زجاج نافذتي

حاولتُ أن أرسلَكَ إلى أُمِّكْ
التي علَّمتْكَ الدَلَعَ . . والفَوْضَى . .
وهوايةَ جمعِ الطوابعْ . .
وجَمعِ النساءْ . .
ولكنَّها أعادَتْكَ لي بالبريد المضمُونْ . .
مع أطيبِ التمنِّياتْ . . .

* * *

حاولتُ ادخالَكَ إلى مدرسةٍ داخليّةْ . . .
تتعلَّمُ فيها شيئاً مِنَ الحُبّ . . .
وشيئاً مِنَ الشّعْر . .
وشيئاً مِنَ الفُروسيَّةْ
ولكَنَّ ناظِرَة المدرسةْ
أرجعتْكَ في نهاية اليوم الأوَّلْ
بَعْدَما تعاركْتَ مع جميع الأساتذَةْ . .
وأضْرَمْتَ النّار في ثياب التلميذَاتْ ! ! . .

* * *

حاولتُ اَن أقْتَلِعَكَ مِن تُرابِ ذاكِرَتي
فوجَدْتُ أنَّكَ مُتشَبِّثٌ بأَنْسِجَتي
كَنَباتٍ بَحْريّ . .
حاولْتُ أَنْ أقتَلِعَ رائِحَتَكْ
مِنْ مساماتِ جِلْدي . .
فتساقَطَ جِلْدي . .
ولم تَخْرُجْ أَنتْ ! !

* * *

حاولتُ نَفْيَكَ إلى آخر الدُّنيا . .
هيَّأْتُ حَقَائِبَكْ . .
واشْتريْتُ بِطاقةَ السَّفَرْ .
وحجزْتُ مكاناً لكَ على أوَّلِ سفينَةْ . .
وعندما تحرّكت السفينَةْ
تحرّكت الدَّمعةُ في عيني . .
واكتشفْتُ ، وأنا على رصيف المَرْفأْ
أنَّ الذي ذهبَ إلى المنفَى . .
هو أنا . . لا أنتْ . . .

* * *

كلُّ شيءٍ قابل للمَحوْ ، يا سيِّدي
إلا بَصَماتِكَ المطبوعةَ على أُنوثتي . . .

القَمَرُ ... وَالوَحْشُ



1

تتصارعُ في أَعماقي رغْبَتانْ .
رَغْبتي في أَنْ أكونَ حبيبتَكْ . .
وخَوفي مِنْ أن أُصبِحَ سجينتَكْ .
يتصارعُ القَمَرُ . . والوَحشْ . .
والأبيضُ . . والأسودْ . .
والوُجُودِيَّةُ . . والصّوفِـيَّـةْ . .
والثورةُ . . والثورةُ المُضادَّةْ . .
والرَّغْبَةُ في وصالِكْ . .
والرَّغـبَـةُ في اغْتيالِكْ . . .

2

يتصارعُ في داخلي بَحْرانْ . .
بحرُ أُنوثتي المتوسِّطْ
وبحرُ رجولتِكْ . .
المزروعُ بالألغامِ والقراصِنَةْ . .
والأسماكِ المتوحِّشةْ . .
تتصارعُ أمواجُكَ . . وشواطِئي الرّمليّةْ
وغاباتي . .
وأمطارُكَ الاستوائيّةْ . .

3

أواجهُ في حُبّي لكْ . .
خيارَيْنِ لا ثالثَ لهما . .
خيارَ الدخولِ إلى زَنْزانةِ صدركَ النحاسيّ . .
وخيارَ الخروج إلى شَمس الحرِّيَّةْ . .
خيارَ الامتثالِ للتاريخْ
وخيارَ التصادُمِ مَعَهْ
خيارَ القبولِ بخطابكَ السُّلْطَويّ
وخيارَ التمرُّدِ على كلامِكَ المُنْزَلْ . . .

4

تختلِطُ في أَعماقي
مشاعِرُ الغَضَبْ . .
بمشاعِرِ الأمومَةْ . .
وإحساسُ الأَمانْ
بإحساسِ العاصِفَةِ القادمَةْ . .
وأعيشُ أيامي مَعَكْ
وأنا مُعَلَّقةٌ . .
بين أشجار النّار على شَفَتيْكْ . .
وبين الهاويهْ . . .

5

يهاجِمُني صوتُكَ في وَحدتي
كذئبٍ مُشْتَعِلِ العَيْنَيْنْ . .
يتركُ جرحاً في الرَقَبَةْ
وجرحاً في الذاكرةْ
وطَعْنَةً في خاصِرَتي . .
وطَعْنَةً في شَراشِفي . .
ويَعْجِنُني كلَّ ليلةْ . .
بالقِرْفَةِ . . والزَّعفَرانْ . .
والبهارَاتِ الحارِقَةْ . .

6

أتمزّقُ ألْفَ قِطْعَةْ . .
بين حضارتِكَ على الوَرَقْ
وعدوانِيَّتِكَ على النساءْ .
بين حَرائقِ كَلِمَاتِكْ . .
وصقيع قُبُلاتِكْ . .
بين مواقِفِكَ الأَبويَّةْ . .
ومواقِفِكَ النَّرْجِسِيَّةْ . .
بين ليبيراليَّتِكَ التي لا حدودَ لها . .
ورجعيَّتِكَ التي لا حدودَ لها . .

7

في داخلي . .
مسيراتٌ نسائيَّةٌ طويلَةْ
تبدأ مِنْ طَنْجَةْ . .
وتنتهي في حَضْرَموت
وشعاراتٌ مكتوبةٌ بأحمرِ الشفاه
وأعلامٌ مصنوعةٌ
مِنْ خيوطِ جواربَ قديمةْ . .
واحتجاجاتٌ ضدَّ نظام الحزْبِ الواحِدْ
والرجُلِ الواحدْ . .
والفِراشِ المتعدِّدِ الجنسيَّاتْ . . .

8

. وعندما تنتهي المُظاهَرَهْ

وترجِعُ الأمْشاطُ إلى أغْمَادِها . .

وترجِعُ الخواتمُ إلى جواريرها . .

وتعودُ العطورُ إلى قَواريرِها . .

أرمي لافِتاتي . .

وأنسَى احتجاجاتي . .

وأبحثُ عنكَ في أيّ مقهى قريبْ

لأشربَ القهوةَ معَكْ . . .

امرأةٌ بلا سواحل



يا سيِّدي :

مشاعري نحوكَ ، بَحْرٌ ما لهُ سواحِلْ . .

ومَوْقِفِي في الحبِّ . . لا تقبلُهُ القَبَائلْ .

يا سيِّدي :

أنتَ الذي أُريدْ . .

لا ما تريدُ تَغْلِبٌ ووائِلْ . .

أنتَ الذي أُحِبُّهْ . .

ولا يُهِمُّ مُطْلقاً

إنْ حلَّلوا سفكَ دمي . .

واعتبروني امرأةً . .

خارجةً عن سُنَّةِ الأوائلْ . . .

* * *

يا سيّدي :

سوفَ أَظلُّ دائماً أُقاتِلْ
مِنْ أَجْلِ أنْ تنتصِرَ الحياةْ
وتورِقَ الأشجارُ في الغاباتْ
ويدخُلَ الحبُّ إلى منازلِ الأمواتْ
لا شيءَ غيرُ الحُبِّ . .
يستطيعُ أن يحرِّكَ الأمواتْ . . .

* * *

يا سيِّدي :

لا تَخْشَ أمواجي . . ولا عواصفي . .

ألا تُحِبُّ امرأةً ليس لها سَواحِلْ ؟ ؟ . . .

القَصيدةُ السَّوْداءُ



1

كَمْ غيَّرَتني الحَرْبُ . . يا صديقي
كم غيَّرَتْ طبيعَتي .
وغيَّرتْ أُنوثَتي .
وبَعْثَرتْ في داخلي الأشياءْ .
فلا الحوارُ مُمْكِنٌ .
ولا الصراخُ مُمْكِنٌ .
ولا الجنونُ مُمْكِنٌ .
فنحن مَحْبُوسَانِ في قارورَةِ البُكاءْ . .

2

قد كَسَرَتْني الحربُ يا صديقي
ولخبطَتْ خرائطَ الوجدانْ .
وحطَّمَتْ بوصلَةَ القلبِ ،
فلا زَرْعٌ . .
ولا ضَرْعٌ . .
ولا عُشبٌ . .
ولا ماءٌ . .
ولا دفءٌ . .
ولا حنانْ . .
قد شوَّهَتْني الحربُ يا صديقي
والحربُ كم تُشَوِّهُ الإنسانْ . .
فهل هناكَ فرصةٌ أخرى . . لكي تُحِبَّني ؟ .
وليس في عَيْنَيَّ إلا مَطَرُ الأحزان . . .

3

يا سيِّدي :

ماعدتُ بعدَ الحربِ . . أَدري مَنْ أنا ؟ . .

أَقِطَّةٌ جريحَةٌ ؟ .

أم نَجْمةٌ ضائعةٌ ؟ .

أم دَمْعَةٌ خَرساءُ ؟ .

أم مَرْكبٌ مِنْ ورقٍ

تَمْضُغُهُ الأنواءُ ؟ .

أين تُرَى سنلتقي ؟ .

وبيننا مدائنٌ محرُوقَةٌ

وأُمَّةٌ مسحوقةٌ . .

وبيننا داحِسُ والغَبْراءُ . . .

فهل هناكَ فرصةٌ أخرى .

لِكَيْ تُحبَّني . .

من بعد ما حوَّلَني الحزنُ إلى أجزاءْ . .

قد سرقَتْني الحربُ مِنْ طفولتي

واغْتالَت ابتسامتي . .

ومزَّقتْ براءتي

واقتلَعتْ أشجارِيَ الخضراءْ . .

فلا أنا بَقِيتُ مِنْ فَصيلةِ الزُّهورْ . .

ولا أنا بقيتُ من فَصيلةِ النساءْ . .

فمن تُرى يُقْنِعُني ؟ .
أَنَّ السَماءَ لم تَزَلْ زرقاءَ ؟ .
وأنّنا . .
في زمنِ التلوُّثِ الروحيِّ . .
والفكريِّ . .
والقوميِّ . .
يمكن أن نظلَّ أصدقاءَ ؟ ؟ .

4

يا سيِّدي :

لستُ أنا جزيرةَ السَّلاَمْ .

ولا أنا الأُنْثَى التي كان على أَجْفانِها

يستوطِنُ الحَمَامْ . .

ولا أنا . .

نافورةُ الماءِ . .

وسِمْفونيِّةُ الرُّخامْ . . .

يا سيِّدي :

قد يَبِسَ العُشْبُ على شفاهِنَا

وانكسَرَ الكلامْ . .

فكيف نسْتَرْجعُ أيامَ الهوى ؟ .

ونحنُ مدفونانِ . .

تحت الوَحْلِ والرُّكامْ . . .

5

يا سيِّدي :

أنا التي غيرُ التي تعرفُها .

ذاكرتي مثقوبَةٌ .

فلا التَّواريخُ على جدرانِها باقيةٌ

ولا العناوينُ . . .

ولا الوجوهُ . .

والأسماءُ . .

أين تُرَى نذهبُ ، يا صديقي ؟ .
وما هناكَ بوصةٌ واحدةٌ نملكُها
في عالَمِ الأرضِ ،
ولا في عالَمِ السّماءِ . . .
وما الذي نفعلُ في بلادٍ ؟ .
يَصْطَفُّ فيها الناسُ بالطابورِ . .
كي يَسْتَنشِقُوا الهواءَ ! !

6

يا سيِّدي :
لكَمْ أنا أشعُرُ بالإحباطِ ،
والدُّوارِ . .
والإعياءْ . .
فلا تُؤاخذني على كآبتي
إذا قرأتَ هذه القصيدةَ السَّوْداءْ . .

دَرْسٌ خُصُوصِيٌّ



لا تنتقِدْ خَجَلي الشّديدَ . . فإنَّني
دَرْويشَةٌ جدّاً . . وأنتَ خبيرُ .
يا سيِّدَ الكَلِماتِ . . هَبْني فُرْصةً
حتى يذاكِرَ دَرْسَهُ العُصْفورُ . .
خُذْني بكُلِّ بَساطَتي . . وطُفولَتي
أنا لم أزَلْ أحْبُو . . وأنتَ كبيرُ .

أنا لا أُفَرِّقُ بينَ أنْفي أو فمي
في حين أنتَ ، على النساء قديرُ . .

من أين تأتي بالفَصاحَةِ كُلِّها . .
وأنا . . يموتُ على فَمي التَّعبيرُ

أنا في الهوَى ، لا حَوْلَ لي أو قُوَّةٌ
إنّ المُحِبَّ بِطَبْعِه مكْسورُ .

إني نسيتُ جميعَ ما علَّمْتَني
في الحُبِّ ، فاغْفِرْ لي ، وأنتَ غفورُ .

يا واضِعَ التّاريخ . . تحت سريرِهِ
يا أيُّها المتشاوِفُ ، المغرُورُ .

يا هادِىءَ الأعصابِ . . إنَّكَ ثابتٌ
وأنا . . على ذاتي أدورُ . . أدورُ . .

الأرضُ تحتي ، دائماً محروقَةٌ
والأرضُ تَحْتَكَ مُخمَلٌ وحريرُ . .

فرقٌ كبيرٌ بيننا ، يا سيِّدي
فأنا مُحافِظَةٌ . . وأنتَ جَسُورُ

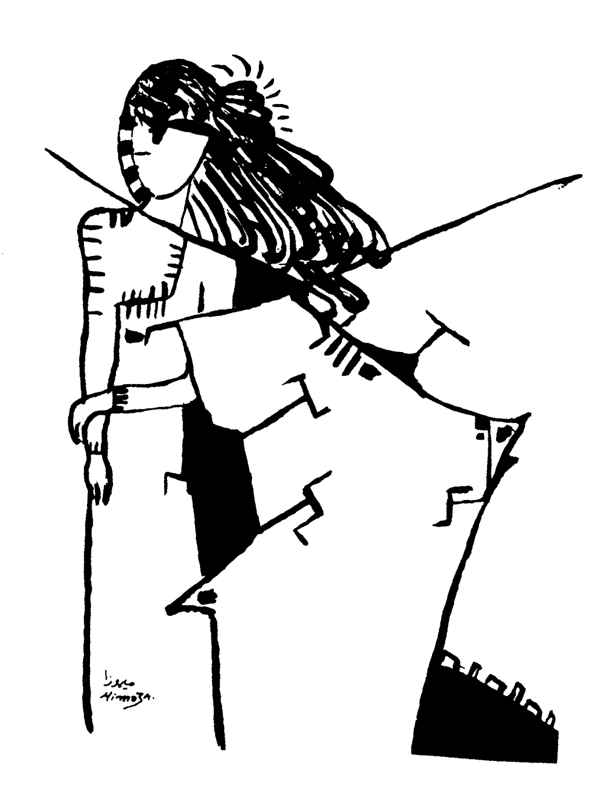
وأنا مُقَيَّدةٌ . . وأنتَ تطيرُ . .
وأنا محجَّبةٌ . . وأنت بَصيرُ . .
وأنا . . أنا . . مجهولةٌ جدّاً . .
وأنتَ شَهيرُ . .

* * *

فَرْقٌ كبيرٌ بينَنا . . يا سَيِّدي
فأنا الحضَارةُ
والطُّغاةُ ذُكورُ . .

لِلأُنثى قَصِيدَتُهَا . .

وَلِلرَّجُلِ شَهْوَةُ القَتْلِ . .


Mimoza.

1

سيظَلُّونَ وَرَائي .

بالبواريدِ وَرَائي .

والسّكاكين وَرَائي .

والمجلاَّتِ الرّخيصاتِ وَرَائي . .

فأنا أعرفُ ما عُقْدَتُهُمْ

وأنا أعرفُ ما مَوْقِفُهُمْ

مِنْ كتاباتِ النِّساء . .

غيرَ أنّي . .
ما تعوّدتُ بأن أنظُرَ يوماً للوراء . .
فأنا أعرفُ دَرْبي جيداً .
والصَّعاليكُ – على كَثْرَتِهمْ
لن يطالوا أبداً كَعْبَ حِذائي .
لن يَنالوا شَعْرَةً واحدةً مِنْ كِبْريائي .
فلقد علَّمني الشِّعْرُ ، بأن أمْشِي
ورأسي في السَّماء . .

2

أَطْلَقُوا خَلْفي كلابَ النَّقْدِ . .
حتَّى يُرْعِبُوني . .
سَخَّروا أجهِزَةَ الإعْلامِ ضِدِّي
واسْتعانُوا بالجُنُودِ الانكشاريّينَ
حتَّى يُسْكِتُوني . .
هكذا أوحَى لَهُمْ سَيِّدُهُمْ
أن يَصْلِبُوني . .

لا كِلابُ النَّقْدِ يوماً ، قد أخافَتْني
ولا هُمْ خَوَّفُوني . .
ليس في إمكانِهِمْ
أن يَقْمَعُوا صوتي . .
ولا أنْ يَقْمَعُوني . .
ليسَ في إمكانِهِمْ
أنْ يُوقِفُوا بَرْقي . .
وإعْصَارِي . .
وأَمْطارَ جُنُوني . .

3

أتَحدّاهُمْ جميعاً .
أَتَحدَّى كلَّ أنواعِ السُّلالَاتِ التي تحكُمُنا
باسْمِ السَّماءِ . .
أَتَحدَّى سارقي السُّلْطَةِ مِنْ شَعْبي
وتُجّارَ العَقَاراتِ . .
وتُجّارَ النِّساءِ . .
أتحدَّى سارِقي حرِّيَّةِ الفِكْرِ ،
ومَنْ أفْتُوا بذَبْحِ الشِّعْرِ حيّاً . .
وبذَبْحِ الشُّعَراءِ . .

أتحدَّى . .

كلَّ مَنْ يَحْتَرِفُونَ السَّلْبَ . . والنَّهْبَ . .

ومَنْ خانُوا تُراثَ الصَحَراء . .

أتحدّاهُم بشِعْري . .

وبنَثْري . .

وصُراخِي . .

وانْفِجاراتِ دِمائي . .

أتَحدَّى ألفَ فِرْعَوْنَ على الأرضِ ،

وأنْضَمُّ لحِزْبِ الفُقَراء . .

4

سيظَلُّونَ وَرَائي . .
بالإشاعاتِ وَرَائي .
والأكاذيبِ وَرَائي .
غيرَ أنّي
ما تعوَّدتُ بأَنْ أنظُرَ يوماً للوراء .
فلقد علَّمَني الشِّعْرُ بأن أَمْشِي
ورأسي في السَّماء . .

ثَورَةُ الدَّجَاجِ المُجَلَّدِ



1

سأُعْلِنُ باسْمِ سُعادٍ ،

وهْندٍ ،

ولُبْنَى ،

وباسْمِ بَتُولْ .

سأُعْلِنُ باسْمِ أُلوفِ الدَّجاجِ المُجَلَّدِ . .

باسْمِ أُلوفِ الدّجاجِ المُعَلَّبِ . .

أنّي خَنَقْتُكَ تحتَ ضَفائِرِ شَعْرِي

وأنِّي شرْبتُ دماءك مثلَ الكُحولْ

ولن أتراجَعَ عمّا أقُولْ . . .

2

سأرمي إلى البَحْرِ ،
قُمْصانَ يَوْمي . .
وأُحْرِقُ كلّ المراكبِ قبلَ الوُصُولْ .
سأُعلِنُ – يا أيُّها الدّيكُ –
أنّي انتقمْتُ
لكُلِّ نساءِ العشيرَةِ منكَ
وأنّي طعنتُكَ . .
مَثْنَى . .
ثلاثاً . .
رباعاً . .
وأنّي دَفَنْتُكَ تحت الطُّلُولْ .
ولن أتراجَعَ عما أقُولْ . . . .

3

سأثــأرُ . .

للحَائراتِ ، وللصَّابراتِ . .

وللقاصِراتِ اللواتي اشترْيتَ صِبَاهُنَّ . .

مثلَ البِذارِ . . ومثلَ الحقُولْ . .

سأصرُخُ :

باسم العَذارَى اللّواتي

تزوَّجْتَهُنَّ . .

وطلَّقْتَهُنَّ . . .

كما تُشْتَرى ، وتُباعُ الخُيُولْ ! ! .

أَيَا عاشقاً . .
لا يُفَرِّقُ في لُعْبَةِ الحُبِّ .
ما بين لحّم النِّساء . .
وما بين لحّمِ العُجُولْ . .
سأصْرُخُ :
حتَّى سُقُوط السَّماوات . .
فوقي ، وفوقَكَ . . يا سيِّدي
ولن أتراجَعَ . . يا سيِّدي
ولن أتراجَعَ عمَّا أقُولْ . . . .

4

أيا قادِماً . .
من كتابِ الغُبَارِ ،
بعينيْكَ ، أَلْمحُ عَصْرَ المماليكِ حيًّا
وألمحُ سُوقَ الجَواري . .
تصرَّفْ . .
كما كانَ يوماً جُدودُكَ . .
يستَمْلِكُونَ النِّساءَ . .
كأيٍّ عَقارِ . . .

ويعتَبِرونَ الأُنُـوثَةَ . .
مَصْدَرَ ذُلٍّ ،
وَوَصْمَةَ عارٍ .
تصرَّفْ ، كأيِّ ابْنِ آوى
يُرَوِّعُ ليلَ البَراري .
فلن أتراجَعَ
يا سيِّدي ، عن قَرَاري . .

5

أيا أيُّها الجاهليُّ المُخَضْرَمُ . .
يا راجِعاً مِنْ فَرَنْسا
على فَرَسٍ مِن حَديدْ . .
وفي شَفَتَيْهِ حليبُ النِّياقِ . .
وطَعْمُ الثَّريدْ . .
أما صَقَلَتْكَ الحياةُ قليلاً ؟ .
أما هذَّبَتْكَ النساءُ قليلاً ؟ .
أما علَّمَتْكَ مقاهي المدينةِ
أيَّ كلامٍ جديدْ ؟ . . .

6

أنا لستُ أُنثاكَ ، يا سيِّدي
فَفَتِّشْ عن امرأةٍ ثانِيَـهْ . .
تُشَابه أيَّةَ سجَّادةٍ
في بلاط الرَّشيدْ . . .

أنا امْرأةٌ مِنْ فَضَاءٍ بعيدٍ
ونجمٍ بعيدْ . .
فلا بالوُعُودِ ألينُ . .
ولا بالوَعيدْ . .
أنا لستُ أُنْثَاكَ . . يا سَيِّدي
فنحن نقيضَانِ في كلِّ شيءٍ . .
ونحن غريبانِ في كلِّ شيءٍ . .
فماذا لديَّ تُريدْ . . .

7

تَصَرَّفْ . .
ككُلِّ رجالِ القبيلةِ . .
غَزْواً . . وفَتْكاً . .
وكرّاً . . وفرّاً . .
فليس بتاريخ جَهْلِكَ . . شيءٌ جديدْ .
تصرَّفْ . .
كأيِّ ابنِ آوى
فلن تتمكّنَ من أكلِ لَحْمي
ومِنْ جَزِّ صُوفي . .

فجسمِيَ أرضٌ حَرَامٌ . .
وعقلِيَ ثلاَّجةٌ للجليدْ . . .
تصرَّفْ . .
كذئبٍ يُجيدُ ثلاثَ لُغَاتٍ
فلن تستطيعَ اخْتراقَ حُصُوني
ولن تستطيعَ احتواءَ جُنُوني
ولن يستطيعَ جُنودُكَ
أن يشْرَبُوا قَطْرةً
من سوادِ عُيُوني . .

8

لسوفَ أُعيدُكَ ، يا سَيِّدي
بكُلِّ احترامٍ ،
كما جئْتَني بالبريدْ . . .
فلستُ أحِبُّكَ أنتَ .
ولستُ أُحِبُّ حليبَ النِّياقِ . .
وطَعْمَ الثريدْ . .

9

سأَنْسِفُ . .

هذي السَّماواتِ . .

نَجْماً . . فَنَجْماً . .

ولَنْ أتنازَلَ عمّا أُريدْ . . .

الفهرس